DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 342 539 RC 018 491

AUTHOR Koury, Kevin A.; And Others
TITLE A Collaborative Approach to On-the-Job Practicum Supervision of Rural Teachers.
PUB DATE 19 Mar 91
NOTE 9p.; In: Reaching Our Potential: Rural Education in the 90's. Conference Proceedings, Rural Education Symposium (Nashville, TN, March 17-20, 1991); see RC 018 473.
PUB TYPE Speeches/Conference Papers (150)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *College School Cooperation; Competency Based Teacher Education; Cooperating Teachers; Elementary Secondary Education; Higher Education; *Inservice Teacher Education; On the Job Training; Practicums; *Practicum Supervision; *Rural Education; *Special Education Teachers; Teacher Supervision
IDENTIFIERS *West Virginia University

ABSTRACT

A chronic shortage of certified special education teachers has plagued rural West Virginia counties. This shortage is exacerbated by difficulties in teacher recruitment and retention. The highest priority of training must go to teachers currently employed in special education positions on temporary permits, since they are likely to continue employment. West Virginia University offers an on-the-job practicum experience for teachers pursuing certification or a master's degree in various areas of special education. The practicum is available to eligible teachers in their own rural classrooms. Through a collaborative practicum model, local cooperating teachers serve as trained field-based supervisors, substituting for university personnel who cannot physically reach the practicum students in their remote rural settings on a frequent schedule. During at least 10 observation sessions, the cooperating teacher evaluates the practicum student on 50 teaching competencies, particularly 5 competencies that the student has chosen to emphasize. The practicum project incorporates collaboration between the university and local school districts during the application process, participants' orientation session, cooperating teachers' training sessions, and debriefing of supervisors at the end of the school year. Available data indicate that well-trained field-based master teachers can provide quality supervision, and that the collaborative model is a cost-effective tool for improving the quality and accessibility of teacher training programs in rural areas. This paper contains 30 references. (SV)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED342539

ACRES PRESENTATION
Presenter: Kevin A. Koury
Co-Presenter: Cheryl L. Wienke
Day: March 19, 1991
Time: 1:30pm - 2:30pm

A Collaborative Approach to On-The-Job Practicum Supervision of Rural Teachers

RC018491

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY
Doris Helge
TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)
✓ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.
• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

Kevin A. Koury
Barbara L. Ludlow
Cheryl Wienke
504 Allen Hall
West Virginia University
Morgantown, WV 26506

A COLLABORATIVE APPROACH TO ON-THE-JOB PRACTICUM SUPERVISION OF RURAL TEACHERS

INTRODUCTION

A chronic shortage of trained and certified special education teachers has plagued West Virginia, especially in the most rural counties. The West Virginia Department of Education (WVDOE, 1985) has reported that many special education teaching positions are occupied by teachers working on out-of-field permits. This shortage is exacerbated by difficulty in recruiting and retaining special educators. Isolation, lack of a support system, and burnout have been suggested as causes for high turnover rates in special education (Holland,1982; Weiskoph, 1980; Ysseldyke & Algozzine, 1982; Zabel & Zabel, 1980). The lack of certified personnel combined with a high rate of teacher turnover has created a need to train additional teachers to fill existing and new positions in special education. The highest priority of training must go to teachers currently employed in special education positions on temporary, out-of-field permits, since they are more likely to maintain employment (Marrs, 1983; Wilson, 1981).

Institutions of higher education face the challenge of developing innovative service delivery systems for the preparation of teaching personnel that are adaptable to the needs of today's adult learners (Hull & De Santos, 1979). Family and financial priorities have forced many students (especially those at the graduate level) to pursue studies on a part-time basis, and leaving employment and/or relocating to pursue teaching certification is often not possible (Culbertson, 1974). The unavailability of practicum experiences discourages some students from entering training programs and prevents others from completing all requirements. In addition, on-the-job practicum experiences may enhance program quality. The practicing teacher is faced with real problems that cannot be duplicated in simulated settings such as summer programs or laboratory schools (Grant et al, 1979). Collaborative training projects that involve school systems directly in the training of teaching personnel have been advocated as a method of providing practitioner input into preservice programs (Griffin, 1986; Pugach & Allen-Meares, 1985; Yarger & Mertens, 1980). On-the-job practicum experiences thus take advantage of opportunities for more realistic and functional training experiences and performance appraisal inherent in the classroom setting, as well as improve the accessibility of training programs to individuals in rural areas.

The Department of Special Education at West Virginia University offers an on-the-job practicum experience for teachers pursuing teaching certification/master's degrees in the areas of Mental Retardation, Learning Disabilities, Behavior Disorders, and Gifted Education. The practicum is available to eligible teachers in their own rural classrooms while they are employed on temporary permits granted by the Board of Education of the State of West Virginia. The Collaborative Practicum Model was developed between 1987 and 1990 with funds provided by a federal personnel preparation grant award. Since supervisors from the university cannot physically reach the practicum student in their remote rural settings on a consistent and frequent schedule, well-trained field-based supervisors are an integral component of this project, which fosters collaboration between the university and local school system. A series of training sessions enables qualified supervisory personnel to be available in the rural remote areas to provide guidance and assistance to the practicum student.

RC 018491

Institutions of higher education have traditionally failed to commit necessary resources to practicum supervision (ATE, 1986). Supervisory duties are given low priority status by faculty members, with the result that inadequate time and effort is devoted to working with practicum students (McIntire, 1983). Studies have shown that the cooperating teacher is the key to effective practicum supervision (Zeichner, 1980; Zimpher et al, 1980). Practicing master teachers have years of training and experience to use in supervising practicum experiences (Blumberg, 1980). They also have knowledge of a particular school system, including administrative policies, available resources, and contact persons. But, in order to be effective practicum supervisors they need direct instruction in skills for observing lessons, providing feedback, and evaluating teaching performance is needed (Emans, 1983). Data collected from previous practicum models used at West Virginia University indicated the need for the further training for field-based supervisory personnel. The Department of Special Education has developed a training program that systematically presents instruction in supervisory skills instruction with practice and feedback over a period of time in observing, giving feedback, providing formative evaluations, and writing summative evaluations.

THE PRACTICUM PROGRAM OPERATION

The practicum student must demonstrate adequate performance during the practicum on fifty (50) competencies in the skill areas of preteaching, teaching, and post teaching. The practicum experience is organized around Competency Based Teacher Education (CTBE), where competencies are specified in behavioral terms and alternative assessment activities are scheduled (Houston & Howram, 1972). Competency based teacher training programs allow students to individualize their practicum according to their own needs (Blackhurst, 1977) and then zero in on skills on which the practicum student needs practice using alternative demonstration activities to show improvement (Berdine, Cegelka, & Kelley, 1977). Following the orientation session the student completes a Q-sort exercise forcing the selection of five competencies in areas which the student wishes to improve teaching performance. In collaboration with the university supervisor and the cooperating, teacher an Individual Practicum Plan (IPP) is developed, specifying how the student will demonstrate the chosen competencies. The university supervisor schedules at least four obvservation sessions during the semester of the practicum. The cooperating teacher schedules at least ten (10) observations during the semester to observe the practicum student in their classroom. During an observation session the cooperating teacher/university supervisor observes and evaluates teaching. Documentation of progress made on the 50 competencies as well as the five specific competencies included in the IPP is done at that time.

Criteria that must be met for a student to be eligible for on-the-job practicum participation are: (1) enrollment in a program in special education at West Virginia University in Learning Disabilities, Behavior Disorders, Mental Retardation, or Gifted Education; (2) possession of a valid West Virginia teaching permit in the area of special education in which practicum is to be completed; (3) teaching experience of at least two academic years in the area of special education in which the practicum is to be completed; (4) permission from the superintendent of schools and the building principal for the practicum to be conducted in the school setting; (5) employment in a classroom setting which meets the state program standards for the area of specialization with appropriately placed pupils; (6) provision by the school district of a master teacher certified in the area of specialization to act as a cooperating teacher; and (7) sucessful completion of all required coursework for state certification recommendation by West Virginia University.

COLLABORATION IN PRACTICUM

Four phases of the West Virginia University Collaborative Practicum Project incorporate collaboration between the university and local school systems: the application process; the orientation session of participants; the training session(s) for cooperating teachers and university supervisors; and the debriefing meeting for supervisory personnel at the end of the academic year.

The application process is the initial determination of the practicum team and is dependent upon collaboration between the local school board and central office administrators, the practicum student, the cooperating teacher, and the university staff. The orientation session is the first exercise in collaborative group dynamics involving the practicum students, the cooperating teachers, and the university supervisors. The cooperating teacher training session is a collaborative encounter which helps the cooperating teachers develop supervisory skills. The debriefing meeting serves as an opportunity for cooperating teacher and university supervisors to jointly discuss successes/failures and make recommendations for improving practicum procedures.

The Application Procedure

Students who wish to participate in practicum during an upcoming semester must contact the Practicum Coordinator in order to secure an application for practicum. At this time, a preliminary screening is performed by the coordinator's staff to determine potential eligibility of the student to participate in the practicum experience. Only if eligibility has been determined the student is mailed a practicum application.

The application asks the student to perform a self-appraisal (with documentation) of their status with regard to the completion of all necessary coursework, their experience in the area of specialization, the number of students served, the daily contact hours with these students, and whether or not they are teaching on a temporary teaching permit. This document also requires the student to collaborate with the superintendent, principal, and colleagues to obtain the necessary permission in writing allowing the student to participate in the on-the-job practicum experience as well as verifying who will act as the cooperating teacher for the practicum. The superintendent also agrees to permit the cooperating teacher to have release time to make observation visits to the practicum student's classroom at least one hour per week for the 15 weeks of the on-the-job practicum. The principal of the school gives permission for the student to be observed in the classroom by the cooperating teacher and the university supervisor.

The cooperating teacher must fulfill the following criteria: (1) Possession of a valid West Virginia teaching certificate in the are of special education specialization in which the practicum is to be conducted; (2) teaching experience of at least three academic years in the area of special education specialization in which the practicum is to be conducted; (3) completion of a Master's Degree in Special Education in the area of specialization in which the practicum is to be conducted; and (4) participation in a training workshop for acquisition of skills in using clinical supervision and competency assessment procedures. The individual chosen as the cooperating teacher agrees to serve in that capacity by signing the application and furnishing a copy of their teaching certificate.

The student's signature on this document affirms their intention to attend the practicum orientation session scheduled for the semester in which they intend to complete the practicum requirements, and to comply with all university requirements for practicum.

The Orientation Session

When the application for practicum has been completed and returned to the Practicum Coordinator, a thorough examination of the applicant's coursework, grades, and other eligiblilty factors is performed to determine final eligibility to participate in the practicum experience. Once this has been completed, both practicum student and cooperating teacher are assigned an orientation session at a nearby location.

Individuals who are required to attend the orientation session are the practicum student, the cooperating teachers, and the university supervisors assigned to supervise in the geographic location surrounding the orientation site. During this session, practicum staff complete the necessary paperwork to register each student for the practicum, distribute practicum handbooks

and cooperating teacher packets, explain the requirements for all participants, and discuss concerns or questions arising during the session.

The orientation session sites are strategically located so as to be within a convient radius of driving distance for all practicum students from a particular geographic area of the state. The main focus of the session is to explain the responsibilities of all participants: the procedure for creating the IPP, the verification/demonstration of the 50 competencies, the format for instructional planning, and the various products to be evaluated. Encouragement of questions and discussion allows for all parties to become comfortable with role expectations and clarifies the requirements that must be met by the student.

The Cooperating Teacher Training Sessions

Practicum supervision provided by both the cooperating teacher and the university supervisor is provided by following techniques of the clinical supervision model (Acheson & Gall, 1980; Cogan, 1973; Goldhammer, !969), which focuses on observation and evaluation of teaching to foster professional learning and growth (Garman, 1986). Project staff designed and utilized materials and procedures to train the field-based supervisors acting as cooperating teachers in the skills of observing, supervising, and evaluating teaching competencies.

Materials include videotapes of classroom teaching sessions to observe and critique, roleplay activities to practice supervisory feedback and consultation skills, and simulation activities to discuss problems encountered in supervision and evaluation of teaching. All materials are based on actual teaching situations found in special education programs in West Virginia schools, and on problems typically encountered by practicum supervisors in on-the-job settings. Training procedures use the collaborative consultation model to develop skills of observation, supervision, and evaluation (Idol, Paolucci & Nevin, 1986). Cooperating teachers develop skills of (1) active listening, (2) problem solving, (3) feedback, and (4) consultation (Conoley & Conoley, 1982; Heron & Harris, 1982; Warger & Aldinger, 1986).

The collaborative training sessions include lecture/discussion activities, guided practice, and probe assessments. All training is performed at regional sites within reasonable traveling distance for a group of cooperating teachers. The training session concentrating on observation skills provides participants the opportunity to practice the skill individually and then to collaborate using discussion and critique. Training concentrating on supervisory skills incorporates discussion of clinical supervision practices, practice using roleplay situations, and discussion and critique. Training to increase evaluation skills involves practice in documenting and summarizing teaching competencies, simulation exercises to elicit desired formative evaluative outcomes, and discussion and critique.

The Debriefing Session

Cooperating teacher, university supervisors and practicum staff are invited to attend an annual debriefijng session at the end of the school year . Particapants discuss problems as well as proprosed modifications. This session produces useful information for the practicum coordinator to continue to modify and improve the practicum experience

SUMMARY

The Department of Special Education at West Virginia University has developed a collaborative component to its on-the-job practicum model. The collaborative aspects involve: (1) practicum student interaction with school administrators and their colleagues during the application procedure; (2) collaborative group dynamics among practicum students, cooperating teachers, and university supervisors at the orientation session; (3) collaboration of supervisory personnel during

cooperating teacher training sessions; and (4) collaboration regarding program evaluation and development between cooperating teachers, university supervisors, and project staff during the debriefing meeting. The rural nature of the entire service area for West Virginia University necessitates the most efficient and cost effective use of resouces available. The continued evolution of the on-the-job practicum model based on the data available indicates that quality supervision is possible when field-based master teachers are trained to perform that role, and that structures for enhancing collaboration between the university and the local school systems is an effective tool for improving the quality and accessibility of teacher training programs in rural areas..

References

Acheson, K. & Gall, M. (1980). Techniques in the clinical supervision of teachers. New York: Longman.

Association of Teacher Educators (1986). Guidelines for professional experiences in teacher education. Reston, VA: Association of Teacher Educators.

Berdine, W.H. Cegelka, P.T., & Kelley, D. (1977). Practicum evaluation: A competency based teacher education system. Education and Training of the Mentally Retarded, 12, 381-385.

Blackhurst, E.A. (1977). Competency-based special education personnel preparation. In R.D. Kneedler & S.G. Tarver (Eds.), Changing perspectives in special education. Columbus, OH: Merrill.

Blumberg, A. (1980). Supervisors and teachers: A private cold war. (2nd edition). Berkeley, CA: McCutchan.

Cogan, M. (1973). Clinical supervision. Boston: Houghton Mifflin.

Conoley, J.C. & Conoley, C.W. (1982). School consultation: A guide to training and practice. Elmsford, NY: Pergamon Press.

Culbertson, D.J. (1974). Corporate role in lifelong learning. In D.W. Vermilye (Ed.), Lifelong education. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Emans, R. (1983). Implementing the knowledge base: Redesigning the function of cooperating teachers and college supervisors. Journal of Teacher Education, 34 (3), 14-18.

Garman, N. (1986). Clinical supervision: Quackery or remedy for professional development. The Journal of Curriculum and Supervision, 1 (2).

Goldhammer, R. (1969). Clinical supervision: Special methods for the supervision of teachers. New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston.

Grant, G. et al. (eds.). (1979). On competence. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Griffin, G.A. (1986). Clinical teacher education. In J.V. Hoffman & S.A. Edwards (Eds.). Reality and reform in clinical teacher education. New York: Random House.

Heron, T.E. & Harris, K.C. (1982). The educational consultant: Helping professionals, parents, and mainstreamed students. Boston: Allyn & Bacon.

Holland, R.P. (1982). Special education burnout. Educational Horizons, 60 (2), 58-64.

Houston, W.R. & Howram, R.B. (edsl) (1972). Competency-based teacher education. Chicago: Science Research Associates.

Hull, G.L. & De Santos, V. (1979). How to teach adult learners on their own terms. Audio-Visual Instruction, 24, (8), 14-15.

Idol, L., Paolucci-Whitcomb, J. & Nevin, A. (1986). Collaborative consultation. Rockville, MD:Aspen.

Marrs, L.W. (1983). Involving citizens and agencies in rural communities in cooperative programming for handicapped students. Murray, KY: National Rural Research and Personned Preparation Project.

McIntire, D.J. (1983). Field experience in teacher education: From student to teacher. Washington, DC: Foundation for Excellence in Teacher Education (ERIC Document 225942).

Pugach, M.C., & Allen-Meares, P. (1985). Collaboration at the preservice level: Instructional and evaluation activities. Teacher Education and Special Education, 8 (1), 3-11.

Warger, C.L. & Aldinger, L.E. (1984). Improving student teacher supervision: The preservice consultation model. Teacher Education and Special Education, 7 (3), 155-163.

Weiskopf, P.E. (1980). Burnout among teachers of exceptional children. Exceptional Children, 47, 18-23.

West Virginia Department of Education (1985). The Education of Exceptional Children in West Virginia's County School Districts, 1984-1985, Selected Enrollment and Financial Information. Charleston, WV: Bureau of Learning Systems.

Wilson, S.W. (1981). How to keep them in rural Appalachia. National Rural Project Newsletter, 3 (1), 13.

Yarger, S.J. & Mertens, S. K. (1980). Testing the waters of school based teacher educaiton. In D.C. Corrigan & K.R. Howey (eds.) Special education in transition: Concepts to guide the education of experienced teachers. Reston, VA: Council for Exceptional Children.

Ysseldyke, J.E. & Algozzine, B. (1982). Critical issues in special and remedial education. Boston: Houghton Mifflin.

Zabel, R. H. & Zabel, M.K. (1980). Burnout: A critical issue for educators. Education Unlimited, 2 (2), 23-25.

Zeichner, P. (1980). Myths and realities: Field-based experiences in pre-service teacher education. Journal of Teacher Education, 31 (60).

Zimpher, N, DeVoss & Nott, D. (1980). A closer look at university student teacher supervision. Journal of Teacher Education, 31 (60).